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Against Hypocrisie.

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SERMON

PREACH'D at

*St Mary Magdalen's* in TAUNTON,

Before the HONOURABLE

Mr JUSTICE POWIS,

And the HONOURABLE

Mr BARON BURR;

At the ASSIZES held there,

MARCH 20. 170<sup>5</sup>.

By CHARLES JONES, L.L.B. Late Fellow of  
*New-College* in OXFORD; Now Rector of *Nettlecomb*  
and *High-Ham* in *Somersetshire*; and Chaplain to  
the Right Honourable THOMAS Earl of PEM-  
BROKE, Lord President of the COUNCIL.

Published at the Request of the Gentlemen of the  
Grand-Jury.

L O N D O N:

Printed by *John Matthews*, for *William Hawes*,  
at the *Bible and Rose* in *Ludgate-street*; and  
*Henry Chaulklin*, Bookseller in *Taunton*. 1705.



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Before the HONOURABLE

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At the ASSIZES held there,

MARCH 20, 1702.

By CHARLES JONES, LL.B. Late Fellow of  
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and High-Church in Exeter; and Chaplain to  
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*The Epistle Dedicatory*  
TO  
*Sir JOHN TREVELLAN, Bart.*  
**HIGH SHERIFF**  
OF THE  
**County of SOMERSET:**

As also, to  
*Sir FRANCIS WARRE, Bart.*

And the rest of the GENTLEMEN of the  
GRAND-JURY

For the ASSIZES held at  
**TAUNTON.**

*Gentlemen,*

**Y**OU have Requested the Publication of this Discourse, and  
You are obey'd; which is the  
best Excuse I can make for Publish-  
B ing



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*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

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ing of it. I presume it was the Subject, more than the Management, which recommended it to your Approbation. As there is no Art in what is delivered in it, so it is the more Agreeable to its Topick, being the Natural Effect of Truth and Sincerity. Sincerity is the Glory of your own Characters, and with the utmost Degrees of it,

*I am,*

*Gentlemen,*

*Your most Humble Servant,*

*Charles Jones.*



AN  
ASSIZE-SERMON,

Preach'd at

T A U N T O N.

JOSH. XXIV. 14.

*Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in  
Sincerity and in Truth.—*

**W**Hen *Joshua*, by God's Providence and Appointment, had Conducted the Children of *Israel* through a great many Dangers and Difficulties; and at last through the Miraculously divided *Jordan*, into the Promis'd Land, and settled them in the quiet Possession of it: He was extremely desirous to fix them in the True Religion, to root out Profaneness and Immorality, which are the necessary Consequences of War; and to Establish them in the Pure Worship of the True God, who had so wonderfully brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, and given them an undisturb'd Settlement in the good Land of *Canaan*. And now being old, and finding the time of his Dissolution drawing near, he thought he could not leave them a more substantial and endearing Legacy, than an



earnest Exhortation to Godly *Sincerity*; that might have a Happy Influence upon their Lives after his Death, that might make them True and Constant to their Religion, and prevent their falling into the Idolatry of the Nations that were round about them. Whereupon in the preceding Chapter, he calls a general Assembly of *all Israel*, of the *Elders* and *Heads* and *Judges*, and *Officers* of the several Tribes; and, with a great force of Rhetorick, and Conviction of Argument, displays the stupendous Works of God in their perfect Beauty, and presents the Divine Attributes to their view in the most dazzling Glory that Mortality can bear. He represents to them the many weighty Considerations and engaging Advantages of continuing Firm and Steady in their Religion; tells them what God had already done for them, and what more he would do; that he had driven out for their sakes, *Great Nations and Strong*; *That no man had been able to stand before them*; and that for the time to come, *One of them should Chase a Thousand*, and *Two put Ten Thousand to flight*: In short, that he wou'd Visibly Espouse their Cause, and evidently Fight their Battles; but on the other side, if they basely forsook their Great Benefactor, and Treacherously Apostatiz'd from his Covenant; he wou'd then put an end to their Conquests, and instead of Honour and Success, nothing but Shame and Destruction wou'd attend them; the very *Land, that flowed with Milk and Honey*, wou'd but lead them into Temptation, and nothing wou'd deliver them from that Evil, which GOD design'd to bring upon them: All the little Contemptible Nations round about, wou'd be *Snares* in their ways, *Scourges* in their Sides, and *Thorns* in their Eyes.

Thus .



Thus he fairly sets before them the Reward of their Obedience, and the Punishment of their Transgression: He allures them with the *Blessing* from Mount *Gerizim*, and lest that shou'd prove ineffectual, he terrifies them with the *Curse* from Mount *Ebal*. And to shew the great Weight and Importance of his Religious Design, and how truly Solicitous he was for their Happiness and Prosperity, he Summons the same August Assembly together a second time; and gives them a short, but comprehensive History, of the Wonderful Goodness of God to them and their Fathers, from the Days of *Abraham*, down to the time, when God had given them the Privilege of a *Land, for which they never laboured, to dwell in Cities which they never built, and to eat of Vineyards which they never planted.*

And now, having sufficiently inform'd their Judgments, we find him attracting their Wills, and engaging their Affections, with all the Charming Eloquence of an Orator, the Exemplary Courage of a General, and the Obliging Civility of a Courtier, in order to make them as stedfast in their Faith, and as resolute in God's Service, as he, in the Verse immediately following my Text, declares himself to be, *As for me, and my House, we will Serve the Lord.*

Whereupon he infers the Duty, of *Fearing the Lord*, not from the usual Topick of his Power and Justice, but even from the gentle Attribute of his Mercy, according to that of the Psalmist, *There is Mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be Feared.* Psal. 136.  
v. 4.

NOW therefore, does not so much denote the Particularity of Time, as the Greatness of the Obligation, they lay under to Gratitude and Obedience. NOW therefore carries a mighty Weight, and a Peculiar Emphasis,



Emphasis, and properly refers to the foregoing Enumeration of God's Wonderful Works, and the remarkable Interpositions of his Indulgent Providence. From the Serious Consideration of all which, *Joshua*, in my Text, very Wisely and Pathetically inculcates a Reverential Awe of the Almighty, a sincere Obedience and true Holiness, the proper effects of God's Power, Justice, and Goodness, the Natural Product of Filial Fear and Divine Love.

*Now therefore Fear the Lord, and serve him in Sincerity and in Truth.*

What *Joshua* observ'd concerning the Children of *Israel*, has been equally true, with Relation to God's Church and People, in all times and in all Places; viz. That they have been the Peculiar Care of God's Providence, and that he has always interpos'd Remarkably, and even Miraculously, for their Defence and Preservation.

From the Words therefore, with a particular Relation to the Context, I shall take occasion to consider,

I. *First*, Why God has appointed such extraordinary Occurrences, such astonishing Events, in the Dispensations of his Providence, that we cannot but take Notice of them.

II. *Secondly*, What is the Reasonable Consequence of such Notice, and what good Effect it ought to have upon our Religion.

I. *First*, then, let us consider, why God has appointed such extraordinary Occurrences, such astonishing Events in the Dispensations of his Providence,



vidence, that we cannot but take Notice of them.

1. *First*, They add a Beauty to Providence. We Naturally Love to be surpriz'd, and no parts of Knowledge so warmly affect us, as those which seem at first, the most improbable; there is something in Dangers, we think it an Honour to Encounter, something in Difficulties extremely Diverting, and that which gives the greatest Beauty, to any Science or any Work, is that, which is most a Paradox in it. The daily Shining of the Sun, the grateful Descent of refreshing Showers, the yearly Increase of the Earth, and such like ordinary Occurrences, though really wonderful in themselves, we seldom admire, because they are Common: But when their Order is Inverted, or their Course stop'd; when the Sun stands still, as it did at the Command of *Joshua*, or goes back, as it did for a sign of *Hezekiah's* Recovery; When God for a considerable time with-holds the Rains, as in the Days of *Elijah*; or sends a Famine upon the Land, as heretofore upon *Samarita*; the Rarity and Strangeness of the Occurrence makes us regard the Operation of his hands. And therefore God has appointed such Remarkable Prominencies in his Providence, as Command our Attention, and powerfully extort our Observation.

Thus has He generally led his Church through crooked and uneven Paths, though there can be no doubt but that he might have led them in a direct Line; after this wonderful manner did he all along deal with the Jewish Church, raising the promised Seed out of the Loyns of an old Man, and a barren Woman; whose Descendants were to be Heirs of *Canaan*, and the Blessings of God. But were first

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to be preserved from Famine in a strange Land, by one of themselves, who was wish'd and thought dead. From that Famine they were miraculously preserved; but preserved only to be Slaves: From Slavery, by the mighty Hand of God they were deliver'd; but deliver'd into danger, being presently encompass'd with a Raging Sea on one Hand, and a more Raging Enemy on the other. The Sea, by which they expected to be destroy'd, prov'd to them a miraculous Security; and made way for them to go through. But then, that way only led them into a Melancholy Desert, a Howling Wilderness, where Forty Years they remain'd wonderful Instances, both of the Patience and Protection of God: Till at length they arriv'd at the same place from whence they set out, *Canaan*, the promis'd Lot of their Inheritance. Now why so many Mazes and Intricacies? Why so many Turnings and Windings in Divine Providence, to bring a People back to that Land where they were before peaceably settled? Why, but to make the Scheme of Providence surprising, and to add a Grace to every Event, by the Unexpectedness of it?

2. *Secondly*, These extraordinary Events are a Demonstration of God's Power.

There are various Events which are so unaccountable by us, as to the Causes from which, and the Methods by which they are brought to pass, and yet so exactly answer the Characters of God's Attributes, and the Deserts of Men's Actions, that we must discern the Hand of God in them. There are some things that so forcibly over-rule the General course of Nature, and even the Wills of Men, that we must own them



## Preach'd at TAUNTON. 9

them to be the Work only of an Almighty Agent. Some things, though in themselves not Miracles, that is, Suspensions of, or Repugnancies to, the Laws of Nature, yet through the unaccountable Method of their being brought to pass, and the strange Concurrence of unexpected Powers to produce them, appear at least to us Miraculous; and therefore lead us directly to acknowledge an Over-ruling Power, which must account for them: And indeed when things are so, we need no profound Reasonings, no long Deductions to bring us to this Conclusion; for we seem to own it, even as it were by Instinct, especially if we are nearly concern'd in these great Occurrences. Thus for Instance, (if I may instance from a Real Miracle) the Blind Man in the Gospel, took the Cure that was wrought upon him by our Blessed Saviour, as an indisputable Evidence of God's working in and by him; herein, says he, to the Unbelieving Pharisees, is a *Marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine Eyes*: Esteeming it as great a Miracle, as that which had been wrought in himself (for it was a *Marvellous thing*) that they cou'd doubt so strange an Effect was produc'd by the Power of God. Now as this is true of Real Miracles, so it is also of those Mighty Turns of Providence which appear Wonderful and Miraculous to us, and which Naturally make us look out for a Superiour Cause, that may answer for the Unaccountable Surprisingness of the Event.

3. *Thirdly*, These extraordinary Events manifest God's Justice.

Reason and Revelation sufficiently prove Justice, to be an Inseparable Attribute of the Divine Nature,  
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and therefore when God acts, he does, and must act justly ; we may also from the same Principle infer, that God governs the World, and exercises an Actual Providence over it ; but alas ! Mere Speculation is a lazy Principle, and works but faintly on our gross Apprehensions and sensual Appetites. We are apt to fancy God's Judgments at a distance, and think that though he will one time or other do Justice, yet the Execution is far off ; and then we think it sufficient, in answer to such distant Hopes and Fears, to resolve on Obedience hereafter. Future Expectations seem to call only for Future Obedience, but when God makes *his Arm bare, and his Bow quite Naked* ; when we see him actually strike a Sinner, when we see a just punishment creep after a secret Villain, and seize him unawares ; this becomes a sensible Argument, awakening our stupid Apprehensions, and working strongly on our most powerful, that is, our sensual Faculties ; this shews God actually in the Execution of a Just Government, that Justice is begun, and consequently is productive of Actual Obedience. For this suffers not a Sinner, to lull himself asleep with Vain Hopes and little Pretences, but makes him start like the Terrible Alarm of a Midnight Storm, and presently betake himself to that which may best secure him.

4. *Fourthly*, These extraordinary Events declare God's Goodness.

Patience, Gentleness, and Forbearance are indeed the peculiar Characters, that distinguish this from the other Attributes, and 'tis not without some Difficulty and Reluctance, that God makes use of harsh and severe Methods. But though our Natures are



are extremely averſe to all manner of Correction, yet ſometimes it may be *Good for us to be Afflicted*; and Severity may prove the greateſt Act of Kindneſs. However the Goodneſs of God moſt Illuſtriouſly appears in the ſeaſonable Preſervation of a Periſhing Church and State, in the wonderful Protection of the Righteous, and in giving them warning to *flee from the Wrath to come*. When God, by an extraordinary Providence, ſaves a ſinking Church from Ruine, it teſtifies a great Concern for Mankind, in preſerving to them what is ſo much for their Intereſt, as the Chriſtian Religion. Nay, this is a Mercy even to the Wicked, as being a likely Means to bring them to Conſideration, and a Juſt Value for that Religion, which they perceive to be ſo peculiarly the Care of Heaven. We find by the ſad Experience of the Heathen World, how deplorable a Condition of Wickedneſs and Barbarity Mankind is apt to fall into, whenever 'tis depriv'd of the Light of the Goſpel. Good Diſpoſitions are corrupted, at leaſt are unimprov'd, and Wicked Men grow worſe and worſe; but while the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſtill ſhines bright upon a Nation, and God, with his own hand, removes thoſe Clouds which wou'd Eclipse his Light; not only the thing done, but the manner of doing it, becomes an Ineſtimable Bleſſing. *O that Men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodneſs, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men!* Which that we may effectually do, let us in the next Place,

II. Secondly, Conſider the Reasonable Conſequence of our taking Notice of the Remarkable Events of God's Providence, and what good Effect it ought to have upon our Religion; namely, to make us *Fear*



*the Lord, and serve him in Sincerity and in Truth.* And here I think I cannot do better than consider the several Particulars of my Text apart.

1. *First* then, It is the indispensable Duty of us all, upon such Notice, to *Fear the Lord.*
2. Secondly, *To serve him in Sincerity.* And,
3. Thirdly, *In Truth.*

1. *First*, It is in the indispensable Duty of us all, upon such Notice, to *Fear the Lord.*

Fear is the Natural and proper Effect of God's Power and Justice, consisting in an awful Aversion to offend him, forasmuch as He will not excuse, and can most severely punish all Offenders.

And the Reasonableness of it will manifestly appear by considering that God has planted in us a common Ambition to be Wise, and has given us this Passion of Fear, on purpose to make us so: To teach us to avoid Sin, which is the most egregious Folly, and to make us sensible of God's Displeasure, which is the greatest of all Evils. For which reason Fear is plac'd in our Souls, to give us warning of approaching Dangers, and to prevent the Misfortune of a Surprize. Not to terrifie us with false Alarms, and make us afraid, where no Fear is; but to represent things in their exact Dimensions and true Colours, to put us upon our Guard, and in a good Posture of Defence, that we may either vigorously oppose the Evils when they come, or wisely avoid them by a Timely and an Honourable Retreat: That we may neither be confounded by the fantastick Terrours of Superstition, nor be stupefied and made insensible by a groundless Presumption; it is certain both these Extremes are great Follies, and that



that our Heads may be clear enough to discern them, we must endeavour to possess our Hearts with that *Fear of the Lord*, which *Joshua* here prescribes, and which the concurrent Testimony of *Job*, the *Psalmist* and *Solomon* himself calls *Wisdom*; which is but another word for Religion, the great End and Design of which is, to bring us to a holy Awe, and that Awe is to deter us from Sin; *For shall the Lion roar, and the Children not Tremble? Shall a Trumpet be blown in the City, and the People not be afraid?* In short, miraculous Occurrences and strange Judgments plainly demonstrate the impossibility of escaping the All-seeing Eye, and the Almighty Hand of God; and should therefore teach us to revere his Providence, so as not to think we can do any thing which he will not observe and reward accordingly: And yet by sad Experience we find, there is nothing wherein Men shew a more Unreasonable Partiality than in the Objects of their Fear and Reverence. We tremble at Shadows, while we play with Thunder. The Presence of a Prince, though a Man like our selves, is apt to strike Terror into us, while we live under a supine Contempt of that Majesty, before whom the wiser Angels fall Prostrate and Tremble. There is not indeed any thing, which, if duly considered, shou'd make deeper Impressions upon us, than a Sense of our being observ'd by the Tremendous Majesty of Heaven: Could we but (like *Gebazi*) have our Eyes clear'd from their Natural Dimness, and enlighened to behold Spiritual Objects; Could we behold the innumerable Hosts of ministering Angels upon the Mountains incamping round about us, and God their great King in the midst of them; Could we behold the watchful Eye of Providence always open upon our Actions; This wou'd certainly

Hos. 11.

v. 10.

Amos 3.6.



tainly damp us into a Holy Awe, and abate the trifling Wantonness of our Spirits; we should be serious and compos'd, and act carefully whilst the Great Judge of the whole Earth stood by to observe us; We should then expect that the Consequences of our Actions would be such as they really deserv'd to be. We should not dare to venture on a base Action, upon the hopes of its being conceal'd or disguis'd, but should study *to walk honestly as in the day*, as in the sight of one who is to us instead of all the World; knowing that *all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do*. We should not hope that Darkness wou'd cover our secret Trains of Mischief, knowing that *Darkness and Light to him are both alike*. This would teach us not to do good Actions for base Ends, no, nor base Actions for good Ends, but to approve both our Actions and our Ends to him that judgeth uprightly. Nay, tho' even the *Ark of God* totter, and seem just ready to fall, yet must we not offer to support it with unhallow'd Hands, but trust it to his Providence to whom it belongs. Had we a due sense of an All-seeing Providence continually watching over us, we should abhor to do wickedly under the Colour of a Religious Zeal, or consecrate our Villany with the specious Pretence of doing God or our Country Service. Wherefore, though there was an Excess of Aggravated Malice and Devilish Cruelty in every Circumstance of that *Horrid and Unnatural Rebellion of Forty One*; yet nothing seems more execrable, and (if I may so speak) unpardonable, than that they should all the while design this for the sake of Religion. Where is God's Providence! where is Zeal for his Honour and His Truth, if he has left them to be supported by such Ungodly, such Abominable



nable Practices! They who enter upon such Accursed Actions for the Cause of God, whatever sense in other Respects they may have of Religion, yet certainly they cannot be said to Revere God's Providence; whose remarkable Judgments are put before our Eyes, on purpose to make us Serious and Considerate; and God himself declares this to be the Natural Effect and Design of those Punishments upon Notorious Transgressours, *All People shall Hear, and Fear, and do no more Presumptuously.*

2. Secondly, As Fear is the genuine Effect of God's Power and Justice, so Love and Obedience, are the reasonable Consequences of his Goodness, and lay a particular Obligation upon us to *serve Him*, as my Text prescribes, *in Sincerity and in Truth.*

As He is our *Master*, He calls for our *Fear*; as He is our *Father*, He calls for our *Honour*; as he is our *Maker*, He calls for our *Worship*. It is He that hath made us, and not we our selves: with good Reason therefore, says the Psalmist, *O go your way into his Gates with Thanksgiving and into his Courts with Praise.* And indeed, considering our mighty Obligations, as well as the wonderful Satisfaction that constantly attends the Performance of Religious Duties; How can we do less than frequently present our selves before the Almighty God, Father of all Mercies! How can we, who are his unworthy Servants, forbear giving him our most Humble and Hearty Thanks, for all His Goodness and Loving-kindness to us and to all Men! How can we do otherwise than fall down and Worship him for our *Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life!* And this Religious Acknowledgement, this Holy Worship is, properly speaking, the Service of God. And this  
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necessary Tribute of Devotion is what all Mankind have Unanimously consented to pay to Him, in Return for the many Benefits and Blessings he has vouchsafed to Them.

But in order to make our Devotion regular, and our Worship complete, *Sincerity* and *Truth* must go together.

The Word in the Original, which at large signifies *Perfection*, is here translated *Sincerity*. So when *David* is said to have *walked before God with a Perfect Heart*, it is meant that he serv'd him in *Sincerity*.

And this sufficiently evinces the Propriety of our Translation, as well as the Necessity of a hearty Practice and unfeigned Behaviour: Without which we are not fit for common Conversation here upon Earth, much less are we qualify'd for the Company of the Blessed Spirits made Perfect in Heaven. Whereupon, in opposition to any False or Idolatrous Worship, we are commanded to serve God aright, and do him Justice, according to the *Septuagint*, *ἐν ἑυδελείᾳ καὶ ἐν ἀπλοκαρίᾳ*, some translate it *Simplicity*, others *Singleness of Heart*. But though the various Interpreters differ in the Word, They all agree in the Thing; and there is no one Word in our Language, which so fully comprizes, and so significantly expresses the true Sense of the several Readings, as this of *Sincerity*. Which being the very Soul of Religion, and the necessary Qualification which must render our Obedience acceptable to God, and available to our Salvation; it highly concerns us to know what it is. *Sincerity* therefore is a true and undissembled Service of God, and a pure, uncorrupt and unmix'd Intention of Obeying him. If we consider *Sincerity* as to its Truth and Undissembledness,

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'tis a plain, downright honest Dealing; a Free, constant, open Profession, directly contrary to Hypocrisie, which is a word that has its Denomination from Acting a Part, and Personating a Character, which properly belongs to another, and if applied to Matters of Religion, it is the Shew and Appearance without the substance, or a false and feign'd Pretence of Obeying God, when in Reality we only gratifie our selves. He therefore may properly be stiled a Man of Sincerity, who really intends that Obedience which he Professes, who is inwardly and truly what he outwardly Appears to be; who takes care to have his Heart and Tongue go together, to have his Intentions answerable to his Declarations, and all his Practices Agreeable to his Pretences, and who with St. Paul, can rejoice in the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity, and Godly Sincerity he has had his Conversation in the World.

If we consider Sincerity as to its Purity and Un-corruptness, it is set in a direct opposition to all Mixture and Allay; wherefore, says St. PETER, *1. Pet. 2. 1, 2.* *laying aside all Malice, and all Guile and Hypocrisies, and Envyies and all Evil-speakings, as new-born Babes desire the Sincere Milk of the Word,* that is, the Christian Doctrine in its Purity and Perfection; Free from the Ceremonial Mixtures of the Superstitious Jews, and the Corrupt Glosses of the Impure Gnosticks. And therefore to serve the Lord in Sincerity according to this Signification, is to pay an Impartial Obedience to his Commands, for his Sake, and use our utmost endeavours to please him, without Mixing therewith any Wicked Intention of serving Sin, or sinister design of Promoting any By-end or Temporal Interest



Interest of our own as much, or more than we do God's Service.

3. *Lastly, 'Tis our Duty to serve God in Truth.* We are all of us naturally very eager in our Pursuit and Enquiry after Truth, and as Success therein affords us a great deal of Joy and Satisfaction, so a Consciousness of Ignorance and Error, is always attended with Shame and Confusion. And if Truth be valuable in any thing, (as it is in every thing) it must certainly be so in matters of Religion. For if in our Opinions of, or Applications to the Divine Majesty, we suffer our selves to be deluded by Error, and carried away with wrong Notions; we do, with respect to our selves at least, deform and dishonour the God whom we Adore. God requires to be Worship'd as he is, *in Spirit and in Truth*; and therefore the Compliance, or rather Encouragement, that is shewn by us to the Irregularity and Variety of Opinions in Religion, is a deplorable Sign, and palpable Instance of our Degeneracy and Corruption. When our Saviour gives it as his peculiar Character, that *he is the Truth*; that is, that great Prophet who was to instruct Men in the Truth; when he bids us *search the Scriptures* to find it, when he tells us that the Great Office of the Holy Spirit is to *lead his Disciples into all Truth*; when his Apostles enjoin us to *hold fast that which is Good, to beware of False Teachers*, and false Doctrines; certainly they must mean that we ought to endeavour to have our Judgments rightly inform'd, as well as to make them the Guides and Rules of our Actions. But though Truth be strong, and generally speaking will prevail; though it comes upon us with such a mighty Violence, and irresistible Force, that we cannot help embracing it; yet  
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we are unhappily fallen into those latter days, whereof the Holy Spirit of God expressly tells us, That *Perilous Times shall come, wherein Men, (being Proud, Unthankful, Unholy, without Natural Affection, Truce-Breakers, False Accusers, Incontinent, Fierce, Despisers of those that are Good, Traitors, Heady, High minded, Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God; having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof) shall Resist the Truth.* 2 Tim. 3. 1, 3, 4, 5, 8.

That this Prophecy of St. Paul is now literally fulfilled, one may be apt to think, from some prevaricating Practices, some false Hypocritical Dealings in Matters of Religion, which the Men of our Times are most Notoriously guilty of, that are a downright Contradiction to Sincerity and Truth, a manifest Dishonour to our Kingdom, and an indelible Reproach to the Reformation. And if some that are the greatest Pretenders to Reformation are the Persons that are most guilty in this Respect, the Ministers of the Gospel, (whose particular Business it is to inculcate Sincerity and Truth) must not forbear to reprimand those Vices, which they have but little hopes to Reform. And whilst they are recommending to others the *Fear of God*, they must not themselves be afraid of Man.

I. First then, To our shame we must Acknowledge, there is a Factious Turbulent sort of Men crept in amongst us, who neither *Fear God nor Honour their King, who Despise Dominion and speak Evil of Dignities*, who pride themselves in the Formidable Name of LEGION; and, if they are disoblig'd, threaten in the words of the Prophet, *to lay wast Fenced Cities into ruinous Heaps*, and think that the *Inhabitants of the Land* will now be dismayed and Confound-



ded, with the false Boast of their Millions. But we know their Power, we know their Abode, their Going out, and their Coming in, as well as their Rage against us. And by this Character other People will know them too. They are Men that can be of any Religion, and are therefore generally of that which is most in Fashion. They are for Levelling their Superiours and keeping others low, whilst they themselves are still aspiring to the highest Places, still seeking to Advance themselves to the very Pinnacle of Preferment; where, being intoxicated with Ambition, and giddy with the unusual height, their Heads run round, and they are as restless and unfix'd as ever. They are so many State-Weathercocks that are in the Power of every Breath, and are turn'd about with every Wind, and never continue steady to any Honourable Principles, nor True to any one Point. The prevailing Party is usually attended with this Flying Squadron; here Interest is the word, and right or wrong they will pursue it, openly, and in the Face of the Sun. In this we cannot but own they are punctually True, and indeed it is the only thing wherein they shew any Courage or Sincerity. Godliness is the plausible Pretence, and Conscience the mighty Cry; but Pride and Hypocrisie, Fawning and Flattery, Lying and Dissimulation, Rebellion and Cruelty are in their Habitations; and the ways of Truth and Charity, Righteousness and Constancy have they not known. They are of such fickle, wavering, desultory Tempers, that (like the *Demoniac* in the Gospel, whose Diabolical Characteristick they value themselves so much upon) no Fetters can Tame, no Chains can hold, no Ties can bind them.



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 If our *Jerusalem* be in Peace; and they *Prosper that Love Her*, if the Church and State, (whose Interests are so inseparably United, that they must stand and fall together) are in a Happy Flourishing Condition, and there is as little Room as Reason for any Disturbance; then we are sure to have their Company; Then Salvation is to be had in our Church; Then they are ready to Report that *Christ is with us of a Truth*. But if Antimonarchical Principles prevail, and Treacherous Latitudinarians rend the Church; if ravening Wolves in Sheep's Clothing separate the Flock; if false Prophets arise, and one of them say, *Lo here is Christ in the Desert*; these stragling Sheep are Presently wandering thither. These broken Reeds (being shaken with every Wind of Doctrine, and carried to and fro with every popular Blast) *piercing the Hands of those who lean upon them*; intimidate Authority with their Numerous Divisions, and Threaten the Government with their Factionous Field-Meetings. Or if another say, *Lo he is there, in the secret Chambers of the Separate Congregations*; thither the giddy Multitude immediately repairs, and having paid their Devotion to every Sect, they Abandon their Interest again, upon Occasion, as easily as before they espous'd it. In the Morning they are of one Religion, in the Afternoon of another, to Morrow of a third, till at length they come to be of no Religion at all; and indeed the inevitable Consequence of thus superficially *Proving all things* must be to Hold Fast nothing that is Good. This shuffling Temporizing Behaviour, this Hypocritical, Disingenuous Dealing, this Playing Fast and Loose with Religion, this Pharisaical Trimming between the Church and the Conventicle, must be a scandal to all good Christians, and a Stumbling-block

to



to the very Heathens: However, I am sure 'tis Diametrically opposite to that Purity of Worship, and Sincerity of Devotion, which is recommended to us by *Joshua* here in my Text. 'Tis a Feint of Advancing towards Heaven, but in reality 'tis only how to thrive upon Earth? 'Tis pretending to a more than ordinary *Fear of the Lord*, and serving him *in Truth*, and with a Perfect Heart, whereas in Truth it is only serving themselves all the while; 'tis a Sacrifice without any Heart at all, which has always been thought Ominous as well as Unnatural.

2. Secondly, Another Instance of Infincerity, too common amongst us, is what may properly be call'd Dissimulation. When Mens Hearts and Judgments are right, when they know and love the Truth, and yet, through Fear, or want of Spirit and Resolution, dare not Profess with their Mouths, what they believe in their Hearts. Of this we have two Instances in the Great Apostle of the Circumcision. The First in the Denial of his Master; the Second in his Unreasonable Compliance with some Judaizing Disciples. There can be no doubt from St. *Peter's* Behaviour, both before and after his Denial, that he was thoroughly satisfied, of our Saviour's being the *Messias*, and the Son of God; and yet when he came to be charg'd with being his Disciple, he cou'd not be Prevail'd upon so much as to Confess, that he *knew the Man*. And there can be as little doubt, but that he was convinc'd of the Non-Obligation of the Jewish Law to Christians, and accordingly before some mistaken Brethren came down from *Jerusalem* to *Antioch*, he Convers'd freely and did eat with the Gentiles; yet when those Mistaken Zealots were come,



come, he, through an Unjust Fear of offending those weak Consciences, *withdrew; and separating himself* from the Conversation of the Gentiles, again gave up his Christian Liberty so far, that St. Paul thought, *He was to be Blamed*, *κατακρινεσθαι*, which, as some Interpreters have it, signifies Charg'd with Hypocrisie: And he was as seasonably detected, as he was necessarily withstood; for all the Jewish Converts following his Example, immediately scrupled to have any Familiarity with the Gentile-Christians, and Barnabas also was carried away with their Dissimulation. When an open Profession therefore is requir'd, Concealment is Treachery; and Our Blessed Saviour will own none, who are Asham'd of Him, in the midst of a Crooked and Perverse Generation.

Gal. 2. 11,  
12, 13.  
Vid. Hama.  
in loc.

We may reasonably suppose, the Apostle wept as Bitterly for his Dissimulation, as for the Denial of his Lord; and wou'd to God all those that have been guilty, either of the one, or the other, wou'd likewise Imitate him, in the Sincerity of his Repentance! But,

3. *Thirdly*, There are some amongst us, who, having no Fear of God before their Eyes, nor any Sincerity in their Hearts, coldly pretend to be Members of the Church, and yet at the same time warmly promote the Interest of the Conventicle. Who on the Lord's Day go with us, to the House of God as Friends (though indeed their indecent Behaviour there, gives us Just Reason to suspect them) and all the Week after Associate and side with those who, if they had Power Answerable to their Wills, wou'd Infallibly Pull the House of God down, and lay Her Honour in the Dust. And they cover this their Gross Hypocrisie,



hie, with the Fashionable Cloak of MODERATION, which is a very good Word, but now among the Common Sort of People, it is brought to signifie a very bad Thing. viz. a Carelessness, Lukewarmness, and Indifference in Religion; which is so far from being a Virtue, that God Reprimands it in the *Laodiceans* as a detestable Vice, and because they were *neither Cold* Rev. 3. 16. *nor Hot*, Threatens in the Revelations to *spue them out*. And yet this being *neither Cold nor Hot* is now the Happy Temper of our Climate; and this Qualifying Allay in the Composition of Man, is the Modish Accomplishment of our Refin'd Age.

Indeed as *Moderation* signifies a Government of our Passions, a Restraint of our Appetites, and a Regulation of our Actions, when their Object is not already fix'd and determin'd; it is an Excellent thing, and undoubtedly a Virtue. But as it signifies a Readiness or Disposition, to make or admit of Alterations in Religion, (in which Sense it is now Vulgarly understood) 'tis nothing but Noise, Impertinence, Popularity and Cant; unless it can be prov'd, (what yet has never been, and I dare say never will be) that the Present Constitution is Immoderate.

We meet with the Word Moderation but once in all the *English Bible*, let your Moderation be known unto all Men. And there it is not understood; for in the Original it is *Επιεικής*, which properly signifies Patience under Sufferings, or Prudence and Temper, Gentleness and Meekness under Persecution. But of late it is set in a direct Opposition to Zeal, by some People, whose Moderation is so well known to all Men, that 'twould be altogether needless to insist upon it.

St.



St. Paul tells us *it is good to be zealously affected always in a Good thing.* He encourages us *to stand Fast in the Faith, to stand Fast in one Spirit, to stand Fast in the Lord.* And St. Jude exhorts us *to contend earnestly for the Faith.* But these wavering unsincere People have so little Faith, that perhaps they hardly think it worth Contending for. 'Tis true they profess themselves of our Religion, because it is Establish'd; and had any other Religion the same Advantage, no doubt they would as readily embrace it: Nay they now Sooth the several Sektaries in their Schism, and Flatter them in their Separation; and by a peculiar Logick, as well as Language, make it plainly appear, that a TOLERATION is the same as an Establishment. Thus while they are with us in Appearance, they are against us in Principle; and though they come to Church, yet at the same time there is a private Signal whereby the Dissenters know them to be their Friends; and therefore, upon all occasions, they securely fall in with them, promote their Interest without any Moderation, and doubtless have some Reason to think them the fittest Persons they can trust, to carry on the Good old Cause. But alas, what Confidence can there be in such a Friendship! what Security in such a Familiarity! what Foundation to build any Intimacy upon, when the Balance of their Affections is so exactly Pois'd, that the least Grain of Interest will turn the Scales! We find indeed by experience, these Men of Moderation for the Generality are as Indifferent in their Friendship, as in their Religion. They think to carry themselves so Fair, and Trim so Cleverly, as to be thought well of by both sides; till at last they are trusted by none, and despis'd by all.

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4. Lastly,

Gal. 4. 18.

1 Cor. 16.

13.

Phil. 1. 27.

4. 1.

Jude. 3.



4. *Lastly*, Another Scandalous Instance of Hypocrisie, is of those who Dissent from our Church as Superstitious, Popish and Idolatrous, and yet, upon Occasion, Conform to our Worship; and, which is the most Solemn Act of our Religion, receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, not as others do, to Qualifie themselves for Heaven, but only for a Profitable Place here upon Earth. Who Occasionally approve of what they constantly Condemn, profane the Church and themselves too for an Employment in the State; and come ineking to the Communion, that they may the better Promote the Cause of Separation.

Good God! That any who Profess and call themselves Christians, shou'd offer to make so sacred and Sublime an Institution, subservient to such sorry Uses, such secular Purposes! That any, who stile themselves the Righteous, the Godly, and the Elect, shou'd thus trample under foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant an Indifferent, Common, Unholy Thing! What mighty Struggles, what dismal Shocks, what terrible Remories must they needs have within their Breasts, before they can thus prevail upon themselves to lay aside all Thoughts of God's Omnipresence all Regard for Justice, Honour, Conscience, and Religion!

They may pretend what they will, but if the External Behaviour be any certain Indication of the Mind, (as the Psalmist Concludes, by his guessing at the Thoughts of the Fool, from his being Corrupt, and become Abominable) This Overt-Act of Insincerity plainly discovers their Atheistical Sentiments; and, notwithstanding all their outward Professions and Practices



Practices of Piety, they say in their Hearts, *There is no God.*

'Tis very surprizing, that in a Nation, where Men enjoy the clear Light of the Gospel (which recommends no Virtue more than that of Sincerity and Openness of Heart, in opposition to all Disguise and Double Dealing) such a Detestable Hypocrisie, as that of OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY, should dare to appear in Publick: Which, however 'twas invented, cannot by all the nice *Distinctions* of the *Jesuits* be defended: 'Tis an Affront to God, and an Offence to all good Men; 'tis an Evasion of the Laws, and a Ridiculing of the Government; 'tis a Repugnance to all Reason, and a Scandal to all Religion; 'tis an Inconsistence in Principles, and a Contradiction in Terms.

And yet this is now a-days so Common a Practice, that we must be guilty of as great Baseness and Insincerity as those Persons I am now Treating of, if we pass it over in Silence.

The Eastern King's Dumb Son, that had been silent all his life before, could not forbear speaking, and that very plainly too, when he saw a Dagger aim'd at his Father's Breast. And shall they who are Sons of the Church see their Holy Mother betray'd and Wounded by these her pretended Friends, but Mortal Enemies; and at the same time tamely sit down and Acquiesce; or, which is worse, with ungrateful *Blasphemy* joyn with the Conspirators? *He that was* heretofore reckon'd a severe Reprimand for an unnatural Heathenish Son; but now there are a great many such Sons whose Flagrant Hypocrisies have the Privilege not to be expos'd,



and whose Traiterous Dispositions never meet with any Reprimand at all. Thus the Abominable Practice of OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY, instead of being censured, to our Wonder and Astonishment is justified; and there are such mighty Patrons to defend, and such subtle Advocates to perplex the Cause, that it is a very hard matter to discover the Natural Deformity of the Vice, through the Deceitful Varnish which they put upon it, to make it pass for a Virtue. And yet if at any time we give but the least Notice of the Dangerous Consequence of this vile Prevarication; if we speak ever Modestly in Defence of our Church, or shew but a just Concern for the Establish'd Religion, we are presently stigmatiz'd as Sowers of Sedition; and rudely Insulted, as Enemies to the Government. Nay, though *Sincerity* be our Text, and *Truth* our Topic, yet if we do but in General reflect upon Insincerity and Falshood, immediately the Conscious Party makes the Application and we are Branded with the Impeding Character of Fiery Bigotted Zealots; and by some that are more remarkable for their Moderation than Charity, we are represented as Hanging out the Bloody Flag, and Sounding the Trumpet of Persecution. But, God be Thank'd, we know what Spirit we are of; we know that an Indulgence to Consciences truly Scrupulous, is Agreeable to the Christian Religion, and particularly to the Doctrine of the Church of England! We know that Rational Creatures are to be convinced by Reason and Argument, Gentle Instruction and a Good Example.

These are the Methods which our Church Prescribes; these are the Rules she puts in Practice; who,

like



like our Blessed Saviour upon the Cross, with open Arms is ready to receive all Mankind: and with a Feruent Charity, which he learn'd from Him, forgives her most Implacable Enemies, and Prays for her very Murderers. And if some others had but the least Tidings of this Charity, were it possible they shou'd make such a Causeless Separation in the Church as they do? If they had any Sense of Shame, or Spark of Ingenuity, wou'd they offer to do that for a Place, which if it were a Sin, they ought not to do, though thereby they were sure to gain the whole World? Wou'd they do more for an Office, than for the Peace and Unity of the Church? That Church which God has Purchas'd to him self, by the Precious Death of His Dear Son? Who, just as the Tragical Scene of his Sufferings began, gave the strictest Command Imaginable to his Disciples to Love one Another? Our Blessed Lord knew, that the Unity of Believers wou'd be the best Means of Convincing the World, that He was the Son of God; and that the Divisions and Animosities of his Disciples wou'd in all probability bring his Divine Mission in Question, and frustrate the Great End of His coming into the World; and therefore, in that Admirable Prayer of his, in the 17th of St. John, we find Him thus Applying Himself to His Heavenly Father a little before he laid down his Life for us, *I come to thee, Holy Father, Keep through thine own Name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be One as we are. Neither Pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me, through thy Word, That they all may be One, as thou, Father, Art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be One in us: That the World may believe that thou hast sent me.*

As



As for the Quiet, Peaceable, Conscientious Dissenters, who have all along us'd their Best Endeavours, to be led into the way of Truth, and are yet so Unhappily Mistaken, as really to think it a Sin, to Communicate with us; They indeed have some seeming Excuse for their Separation, their invincible Ignorance is Pitable; and their Unfortunate Error Pardonable; and it is certainly for their Interest, that Occasional Conformity shou'd be speedily Prevented. For the Honest Dissenter will be contented with his TOLERATION, and the Church thereby secure of Her Establishment, and consequently there will be no Fears or Jealousies on either side; but all Heats and Animosities will be Abated, all Noise and Clamours silenc'd, and Perfect Peace and Union, will in all Probability be Establish'd amongst us.

“And therefore 'tis the Opinion of a known  
 “Dissenter, that the Bill against Occasional Con-  
 “formity does not concern those who Dissent from  
 “the Church, upon real Principles of Conscience.  
 “If any State-Dissenters, or Politick-Dissenters, are  
 “crept in amongst them, any that can Conform and  
 “will not; they desire to be distinguish'd from  
 “them, Alledging that all the Parliaments, that  
 “ever were, or will be, can never suppress any  
 “thing amongst them so Scandalous to their Re-  
 “putation, as this Ambi-dexter Conformity.”

But what if these State-Dissenters shou'd, after all, be so very much out in their Politicks, as to sell themselves, and prostitute their Religion for nought? What if, instead of Promoting their own  
 Inte-



Interest, they shou'd at last (as 'tis shrewdly to be suspected) only be made Tools of, to carry on the Ungodly Designs and Villainous Intrigues of the Socinians, the Papists, the Deists, and the Atheists? And when Time, that never flatters, breaks away the Mists of Ignorance and Error from before their Eyes, and they plainly see themselves Disappointed of their Mighty Hopes; with what Regret and indignation will they Condemn their own Folly and Indiscretion! With what Horrour and Confusion will they look back upon the Schisms and Factions, the Scandals and Offences, the Divisions and Disturbances which they have occasion'd both in Church and State!

But though this Notorious Insincerity, this Palpable Prevarication with God and Man, may now be conniv'd at, perhaps to comply with the Softness of some Heads, rather than the Tenderness of their Consciences, as heretofore the Bill of Divorcement was suffer'd for the Hardness of Mens Hearts; Yet from the Beginning it was not so: Nay, it was but a little while ago that OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY had a Beginning, and I may Presume to say, without being Inspired, it cannot be long before it will have an end; since we have so Glorious an Example of Piety and Integrity in ~~Her present Majesty~~ to discountenance it, (who, by Declaring Her Heart to be Entirely English, plainly intimates what all English Hearts should be, Sincere and True;) and since Both Houses of Parliament Agree in the Reasonableness, Necessity, and Substance of a Bill to prevent it, though they Unfortunately differ

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differ in the Ways and Means and Circumstance of Time.

However, I am sure 'tis always a Proper Time to Fear the Lord; 'tis always seasonable to Serve him; and there was never more need of an Exhortation to Sincerity and Truth than Now. Now therefore Fear the Lord, and Serve Him in Sincerity and in Truth.

Which God of His Infinite Mercy, Grant we may All do, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty, Power and Dominion, Now and for Evermore, AMEN.

FINIS.



